

REMARKS

This amendment is being filed in response to the Office Action dated March 21, 2007. In that office action, claims 1-3, 5-8, 11-20, 27, 29-31, 39 and 41 were rejected on prior art grounds, claims 4, 9-10, 28, 32 and 40 were objected to but were indicated as being allowable if they were rewritten in independent form, and claims 33-38 were allowed.

Telephone Interview –

A telephone interview was conducted on May 8, 2007 at approximately 2:00 PM between Michael Adams, attorney for the Applicant, and Examiner Mariceli Santiago. During that interview, agreement was reached on all of the pending claims and the Examiner indicated that the case was now in a condition for allowance.

Beginning with claim 1, the Examiner indicated that this claim is allowable because the prior art fails to disclose a retention feature at least partially surrounded by an outwardly protruding lip, as now recited in amended claim 1. Due to their dependency on claim 1, dependent claims 2-3, 6-8 and 11-13 were also identified as being allowable. Claims 4 and 9-10 were already deemed allowable, assuming that they were rewritten in independent form.

Claim 14 was deemed allowable because the proposed amendments distinguished it over the prior art. Again, dependent claims 15-20, 27 and 29-31 were also identified as allowable due to their dependency on claim 14. Claims 28 and 32 were indicated as being allowable in the previous Office Action, assuming that they were rewritten in independent form.

Claims 33-38 were already allowed in the previous Office Action. Thus, they were not discussed during the telephone interview.

The Examiner indicated that claim 39 was allowable because the prior art failed to show a tip secured to a center electrode by a localized laser formed fusion layer, as

recited in amended claim 39. Claim 41 stems from independent claim 39 and was therefore identified as allowable based on its dependency from claim 39. Claim 40 was indicated as being allowable in the previous Office Action, assuming that it was rewritten in independent form.

Conclusion –

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance and therefore request that the case be allowed. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if doing so would advance prosecution of this case.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-0852 for any required fees, or to credit any overpayment associated with this communication.

Respectfully submitted,

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